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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

US Requests More on Incirlik - Hurriyet
Promises Repeated on PKK Issue - Hurriyet
Cyprus Support from Putin - Hurriyet
Incirlik Request from the US - Sabah
Cyprus Gesture - Sabah
General Abizaid: "We Want to Use Incirlik as an Ally" -
Milliyet
Ankara Warns US and Iraq About PKK - Milliyet
Cyprus Gesture from Putin - Sabah
Two critical Requests at PKK Talks - Sabah
US Repeats Request for Incirlik - Aksam
President Bush Writes on Tsunami Victims - Posta
US Passes Ball to Iraq at Trilateral Meeting - Vatan

OPINION MAKERS

General Abizaid Seeks Operational Use of Incirlik - Radikal
US Will Not Interfere with PKK in Iraq - Radikal
US Insists on Incirlik - Cumhuriyet
Turkish Troops On Their Way to Afghanistan - Cumhuriyet
No Concrete Result From Trilateral PKK Meeting - Cumhuriyet
Northern Cyprus Gesture From Putin - Zaman

BRIEFING

General Abizaid in Ankara: All papers and TV channels cover the visit of US Central Command General John Abizaid to Ankara. The General met with NSC chairman Yigit Alpogan and FM Gul yesterday. Following the meeting with Gul, General Abizaid responded to journalists' questions as he left the Foreign Ministry. "Cumhuriyet" quotes Abizaid as saying that 'We look forward to use the facilities in Incirlik as an ally. It is good for us, it is good for Turkey if we can use the facilities there.' Abizaid stressed that the two sides also discussed the PKK issue. The US, like Turkey, regards the PKK as a terrorist organization, Abizaid said. He vowed that the PKK threat would be eliminated 'over time,' but emphasized that US forces are now focused on providing a secure environment for the upcoming elections in Iraq. "Radikal" reports that General Abizaid presented Turkish officials with a number of demands about the use of Incirlik air base. He reportedly asked the Turkish government to remove the requirement to seek parliamentary approval for the use of the base. However, Foreign Ministry Sources said that Abizaid did not convey any new demands about Incirlik.

Trilateral Meetings on the PKK: "Cumhuriyet" reports that the trilateral meeting on PKK between Turkey-US-Iraq produced no concrete results. Turkey presented evidence and managed to convince the US that the PKK intended to participate in the Iraqi election under different names. The US ensured Turkey that it would exert every effort on the PKK issue, but cautioned that serious measures would have to wait until after the Iraqi elections on January 30. In a joint statement released after the five-hour meeting, the parties said that Iraq and Turkey had agreed to continue to cooperate against the PKK, and that the US welcomed cooperation between Turkey and Iraq on this issue.

Goodwill Gesture From Putin on Cyprus: "Sabah" reports that in the second day of Erdogan's visit to Russia, President Putin made a 'goodwill gesture' by interrupting his meeting with Erdogan to call UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to denounce the isolation of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. "Turkiye" reports that Putin promised to support

Turkey on the Cyprus issue. Other papers say that he indicated Russia's support for the Annan Plan, which was rejected by Greek Cypriots in a referendum last April.
EDITORIAL OPINION:

The Middle East/Palestinian Elections The Abizaid Visit

"Democratic Experience in the Middle East"
Sami Kohen noted in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (1/12):
"Palestinians have shown a strong will to hold the elections in spite of the many difficulties and challenges. The Palestinian election proved that a democratic process is possible even if the circumstances are not the best. This is a very good example for authoritarian regimes in the region. . There is already an expectation that the Palestinian election might create a domino effect in the region and force other Arab countries toward democratization. In this regard, the upcoming election in Iraq is also very important. There are some similarities between conditions in Iraq and those we saw in Palestine. Iraq is under occupation, and Sunni leaders are boycotting the elections. However, the transitional authority and many political parties in Iraq want elections to be held on time. . Under the current circumstances, the holding of a truly democratic election in Iraq would seem to be quite difficult. But the process must be carried through. . If the Iraqi elections are held on time, it will play a vital role not only for the future of Iraq, but for providing a message of democracy to the Middle East."

"A Threatening Virus: Democracy!"
Erdal Safak commented in the mass appeal "Sabah" (1/12):
"Arab kings and sheiks must be afraid of the spreading virus of democracy. The latest example of this phenomenon can be seen in Palestine. The Palestinians managed to conduct a transparent and exciting election process. . Palestine now joins the family of democracies, and can be considered the first Arab country in this regard. Palestine is also the first example in the Arab world in which the new leadership did not come from a dynasty or from a one-party referendum. Such a unique success will undoubtedly put fear into many Arab dictators."

"Abizaid is Here, and the PKK is at the Ballot Box"
Asli Aydintasbas wrote in the mass appeal "Sabah" (01/11):
"Those who are looking for a secret agenda concerning Iran, Incirlik, or troop requests during the visit of CENTCOM Commander General John Abizaid are mistaken. A high-level US official confirmed that Abizaid is here to discuss 'the big picture.' That is, to talk about Iraq -- not just the PKK issue - and Afghanistan, to revive the lagging US-Turkish military relationship, and to prepare Ankara for the possibility that the violence and chaos in Iraq could continue beyond the elections. Several months ago, US and Turkish military officials got together and agreed that the dialogue between CENTCOM and Ankara was one of the most fragile aspects of a Turkish-American relationship weakened by the March 1 vote. The reason is simple. Ankara's traditional interlocutor on the military side was the US European Command (EUCOM). After September 11, issues that fell under CENTCOM - especially Iraq and Afghanistan - gained importance as part of the war on terrorism. CENTCOM was less sensitive to Turkey's historical sensitivities, reluctant to deal with the PKK issue, and undaunted with respect to Ankara due to the disappointment of March 1. During his discussions with the Foreign Minister and Secretary General of the National Security Council, Abizaid

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raised issues ranging from regional security to the future of Iraq. The Americans are concerned that if Sunni participation in the January 30 elections is low, then Turkey will complain and the elections will be seen as illegitimate. FM Gul's recent statements, which he repeated yesterday, that the Iraqi elections should be held on time with the widest possible participation, must have come like sweet music to the Americans' ears. But everyone knows that the elections and the post-election period are problematic. In the Iraq equation, the place of the PKK is far down the list of Washington's priorities. In contacts here yesterday, the Americans handed over the struggle against the PKK to the Iraqi Government, which is a rank amateur in this business. It's like a joke. It is clear that there is little hope on this issue from the Iraqis. It's even come to the point that the PKK is taking part in the January 30 elections as a party with a different name! So the PKK continues to be a military and political problem for Turkey. Looking at the 'big picture,' Turkey is worried about a Shiite administration in Iraq, and about the possibility that a post-election civil war or Sunni-Shiite conflict could accelerate the formation of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq. According to Turkish officials, this second scenarios is the worse of these two possible negative outcomes."